

Lyrical conversations

Celebrated poet-lyricist **Gulzar** turned 81 on Tuesday. During his visit to the city last week for an event, he indulged in a tête-à-tête with the audience before reciting a few original writings from his diary



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Listening to Gulzar recite his writing is like watching a painter work on a canvas. With each word is a fresh stroke of colour. Little by little, he conjures up breathtakingly beautiful images in the listener's mind.

He, along with Vishaj and Rekha Bharadwaj, delighted the audience at Osho International Meditation Resort on August 14 as a part of the *Monsoon Festival*. Before Gulzar took the podium to recite his poetry, Vishal urged him to indulge in a talk. Obliging, Gulzar took a seat on a makeshift stage.

"Many people from the film industry came to the Osho commune. I was introduced to his teachings through them. I remember, I was seated in the audience at one of Osho's discourses and he mentioned a line written by me, '*Tere bina zindagi se koi shikwa toh nahi.*' I was delighted and surprised. I asked Vinod (actor Vinod Khanna) how Osho was aware of my writings, to which he replied that Osho reads a lot. He is well versed with contemporary philosophy, poetry and literature. Before winning the Oscar, I had already won my award by having my work and thoughts discussed in Osho's discourse," said Gulzar, adding that the spiritual leader's philosophy has inspired his writings. "My writings are an endeavour to find myself, to find life, to find answers that we all are looking for," he shared.

The audience asked him questions about

Mirza Ghalib, the television series written and produced by Gulzar, which was aired on *DD National* in 1988. Answering a query on why he chose Ghalib as the subject for his debut TV project, he said, "If not Ghalib, then who else? If you are familiar with his work, you can answer the question for yourself. Naseeruddin Shah, Jagjit Singh and of course, Ghalib himself, deserve the credit for the show."

When asked about his fascination with the moon, and why he mentions it in his lyrics so often, Gulzar replied with a straight face, "I have a copyright of the moon." His answers were short, crisp and witty.

As Gulzar took the stage, he gifted an epiphany to the audience. Narrating an anecdote, he said, "This happened quite a few years back. I had stepped out of the car and it started drizzling. A drop or two must've touched the ground and someone quickly managed to get an umbrella and held it above my head. This gesture made me think aloud. Before it starts raining, we tend to make arrangements to protect ourselves. This philosophy extends to the way we live our lives, planning for old age, death, marriage and everything that lies in the future. Spending our youth planning for it, we forget to seize the moment or live in the present because we prepare to protect ourselves from the inevitable."

This was followed by a number of randomly selected prose poetry which the legendary lyricist selected from loose sheets kept in his diary. On request by the audience, he recited the iconic poem *Lahu luhan hua hai falak*.